

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02

CIEP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 PA-02 PRS-01 /072 W

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R 231808Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9718

UNCLAS KINGSTON 5050

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, JM

SUBJECT: LABOR PROBLEMS (AIR JAMAICA, JANINTEL AND OTHERS)

DISRUPT JAMAICA'S 1975 HOLIDAY SEASON

REF KINGSTON A 226 DEC 22, 1975

1. AIR JAMAICA: ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, AIR JAMAICA EMPLOYEES RESUMED REGULAR SERVICE ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, FOLLOWING A BRIEF DISRUPTIVE STRIKE ORGANIZED BY THE NATIONAL WORKERS UNION (,27). THE STRIKE HAD COMMENCED THE AFTERNOON OF SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21. AIR JAMAICA CANCELLED ITS SERVICES SATURDAY-AN ACTION WHICH STRANDED NUMEROUS HOLIDAY TRAVELERS - AFTER COMPLAINING THAT THE UNIONIZED WORKERS HAD GONE ON A GO-SLOW STRIKE WHICH WOULD HAVE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED OPERATIONS DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON. THE DISPUTE WAS OVER WAGES, FRINGE BENEFITS AND PROFIT SHARING.

A) THE MINISTER OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, THE HON ERNEST PEART, INVOKED FOR THE FIRST TIME THE POWERS GIVEN UNDER THE LABOR RELATIONS AND INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ACT (1975) IN ORDERING THE AIR JAMAICA EMPLOYEES BACK TO WORK AFTER FRUITLESS HOURS OF NEGOTIATION. IN A MINISTRY NOTICE DATED DECEMBER 21, 1975, THE MINISTER STATED THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 10 (SUBSECTION 3), "THE INDUSTRIAL ACTION (I E THE STRIKE) TAKEN IN

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FURTHERANCE OF THE INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE IN THE

UNDERTAKING, AIR JAMAICA (1969) LIMITED, IS LIKELY TO BRAVELY INJURIOUS TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST".

B) THE MINISTRY INSTRUCTED THAT THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE REFRAIN FROM CONTINUING THE INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN FURTHERANCE OF THE DISPUTE, AND ADOPT SUCH MEANS AS ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE WITHIN 30 DAYS FROM DECEMBER 21, 1975.

C) AIR JAMAICA AGREED TO PAY THE EMPLOYEES FOR THE PERIOD OF THE STRIKE. THE NATIONAL WORKERS UNION IN A RELEASE AFTER THE MINISTER OF LABOR HAD MADE HIS ORDER ON DECEMBER 21 SAID THAT ROSTERED WORKERS WOULD RESUME WORK ON DECEMBER 22 AND ALL EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE BACK AT WORK BY TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23.

2. JAMAICA INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS LTD. (JAMINTEL) WORKERS RETURNED TO WORK TODAY, AFTER THE NWU HAD ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE THE COMPANY'S RECLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES, ON THE BASIS THAT THE COMMITTEE REPRESENTING MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS BE APPOINTED TO HEAR ANY APPEALS FROM INDIVIDUALS. AGREEMENT WAS REACHED AT A MEETING AT THE MINISTRY OF LABOR ON SATURDAY. DISCUSSIONS ON GRIEVANCES RAISED BY THE UNION AT A MEETING LAST FRIDAY WILL BEGIN BY JANUARY 15.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH CHRISTMAS 75 HAS BROUGHT YULETIDE CHEER TO THE MERCHANTS WITH AN ESTIMATED J\$145 MILLION IN CIRCULATION, THE SEASON HAS BEEN MARRED BY AN UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBER OF STRIKES OCCURRING AT YEAR'S END. THIS WEEK, THE MINISTRY OF LABOR WILL DEAL WITH THE ONE WEEK OLD GUINNESS (BREWERY) JAMAICA LTD STRIKE AS WELL AS WITH WORKERS AT BATA SHOE COMPANY AND J. WRAY AND NEPHEW LTD RUM EXPORTERS. OTHER STRIKES TO OCCUPY THE MINISTRY'S ATTENTION INCLUDE THOSE AT JAMAICA FLOUR MILLS LTD AND JAMAICA POULTRY FARMS, LTD. IN ADDITION, THE EARLY DECEMBER CLOSURE OF AITKEN, TOWNEND AND GODFREY'S JOINT VENTURE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AT CARIB CEMENT COMPANY (REPAIR) CAUSING A LAY OFF OF 200 WORKERS HAS NOT HELPED MATTERS ANY. WHILE THE MINISTRY OF LABOR MAY BE PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN PAPERING OVER CURRENT DISPUTES, THE AGENCY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY

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BE INVOLVED WITH INTENSE NEGOTIATIONS IN 1976. THE NEW YEAR IS NOT EXPECTED TO BRING A LULL INTO JAMAICA'S HIGHLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE OF INDUSTRIAL-LABOR RELATIONS GERARD

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, WAGES, LABOR STRIKES, AIRLINES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 DEC 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975KINGST05050  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750446-0290  
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**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 111  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 DEC 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 DEC 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <14 JAN 2004 by KelleyW0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LABOR PROBLEMS (AIR JAMAICA, JANINTEL AND OTHERS) DISRUPT JAMAICA'S 1975 HOLIDAY SEASON  
**TAGS:** ELAB, EAIR, JM, AIR JAMAICA  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006